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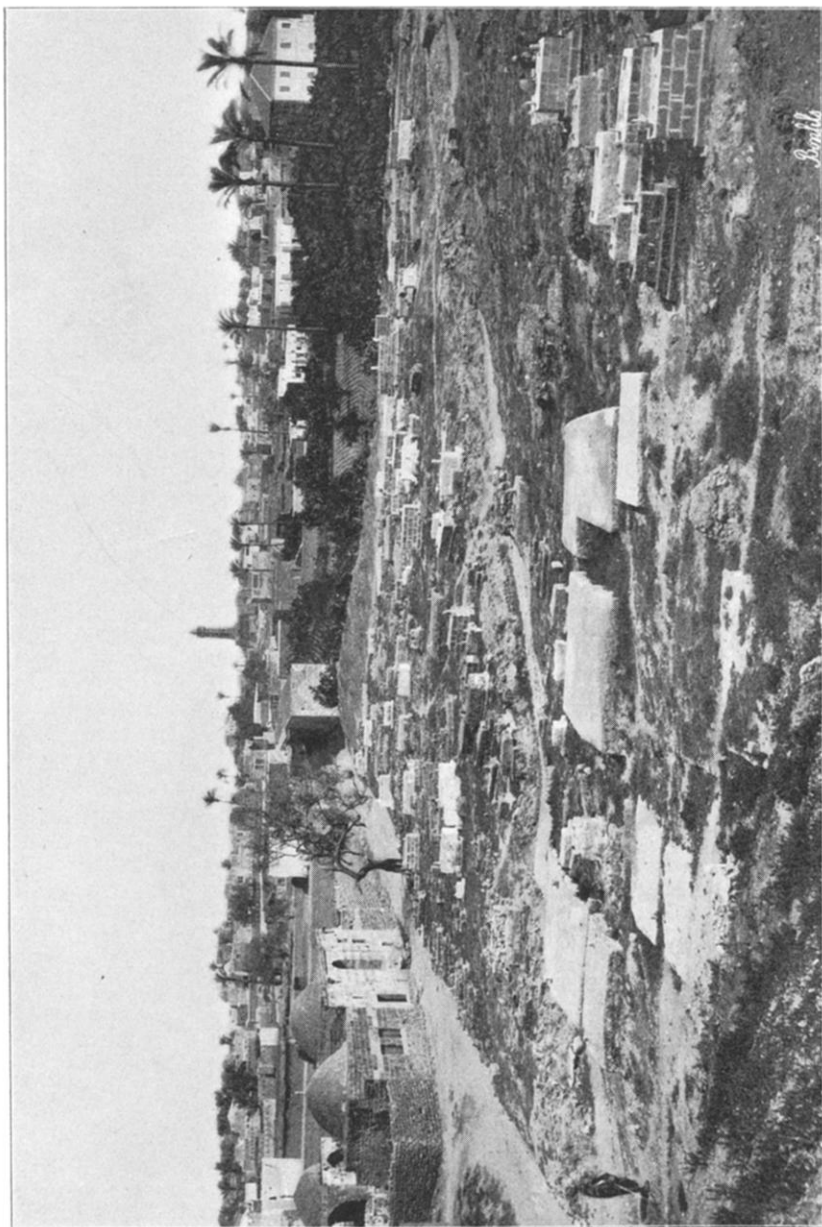
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THE ultimate purpose of all Sunday-school teaching, as of all other parts of the work of the Sunday school, is religious. The conversion of the pupil and his development in Christian character are the ends for which the Sunday school exists, as they are the ends for which the Bible was given. These ends are to be sought in the Sunday school mainly through instruction, and in particular through the teaching of the Bible. Mainly, we say, but not exclusively. The Sunday-school teacher is not simply a teacher. His religious influence on the pupil ought not to be limited, cannot be limited, to that which he brings to bear through the knowledge of the Bible which he imparts, or which the pupil under his instruction gains. He is, or ought to be, the friend and pastor of the pupil as well as his instructor. Whether he intend it or not, he will through his own character affect the character of his pupil. In a large proportion of cases certainly the teacher fails to make full use of his opportunity if he does not by conscious and direct effort seek to exert on his pupil a helpful religious influence. These propositions we have stated dogmatically, without argument, believing that they will be accepted by our readers generally. It is not these which we propose to discuss, but rather the question *how* the



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teacher can most effectively make his relation to the pupil, whether as instructor or as friend, most conducive to the pupil's religious development.

Consider first what the teacher can do in direct connection with his work of teaching. To guard against misapprehension, let that be repeated which has been previously insisted on in these pages, that that teaching of the Bible is not the most effective, religiously, which, disdaining to take time for interpretation, plunges headlong into application. Moral effect is to be obtained through the presentation of truth; truth is conveyed in the Bible through direct statement, or through facts full of meaning; both demand interpretation. But when this is clearly recognized and admitted, the question still remains: How can the teacher make his interpretative teaching most effective religiously?

In the first place, let it be said that the religious purpose must pervade the whole process of study and teaching. The existence of such a purpose deeply rooted in the heart of the teacher gives to his whole work an atmosphere difficult to define, but sure to influence the pupil, though, perhaps, as unconsciously as it is exerted. This intangible but very real quality which is imparted to one's teaching by the spirit and motive with which it is undertaken, this atmosphere which is created by the fact that the teacher's work is undertaken with prayer and carried forward with the supreme desire to render his pupils a real religious service, is the most important factor of the teacher's work, religiously speaking.

But such a purpose, clearly and constantly maintained, does more than create an atmosphere. If combined with the recognition of the teacher's function as an interpreter, of which we have spoken above, it will almost inevitably lead to a perception of how the facts and truths of the Scripture can be made to apply

to the needs and consciences of the pupils. There is, no doubt, a prejudice on the part of many intelligent teachers against any direct spiritual application of the lesson to the class. *APPLICATION OF TRUTH TO THE CONSCIENCE LEGITIMATE AND NECESSARY* The prejudice has its occasion and excuse in the too prevalent substitution of rough and ready application for real teaching. And it may, indeed, be doubted whether teaching without application is not better than application without teaching. But it by no means follows that teaching without application is better than teaching with it. In truth, if the teacher will see to it that he really teaches the Scripture, brings out its meaning, induces the pupil to see the facts and teachings which it contains in their true light, and to fix them in mind, he need have no fear of cheapening his work by pointing out seriously and faithfully the relation of the truths, thus set in a clear intellectual light, to the life and duty of the pupil. Strong, clear, religious teaching, serious appeal to the conscience based on fair exposition of the Scripture, is not repugnant to the pupils of our Sunday schools. They need and they will welcome it. It is not this, but feeble and oft-repeated exhortation based on nothing in particular, that repels them and drives them from the school as soon as they get beyond the years of childhood. The teacher who fairly and forcibly brings forth the meaning of the Scripture record, setting fact in relation to fact, and teaching in the light of its historic occasion—such a teacher does well. But he does better who to such intellectually strong teaching adds now and again, when the occasion permits and his heart impels him, the equally clear, forcible, and direct appeal to the consciences of his pupils. And he who strenuously excludes this latter element from his teaching robs that teaching of an element which would give it, not only added religious value, but increased attractiveness and holding power.

But the best teachers are, as we have said, something more than tutors. They are also friends and pastors to their pupils. In this latter character they have the opportunity to exert a religious influence, we will not say superior to that which they

can exert in the work of teaching, for it is doubtful whether this is true, but at any rate complementary to that of the class hour.

RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE OUTSIDE THE CLASS Suggestions of method in this matter must of necessity be of a general character. The problem is in every case a personal one. No one can lay down

rules by the application of which one person can influence another religiously. The fundamental conditions for the exertion of such an influence are a genuine Christian character on the part of the teacher, and a genuine interest in the religious welfare of the pupil. This interest must not be merely professional and perfunctory, but sincere and personal. Given this, the teacher will find his own ways, whether by private conversation, by class prayer-meetings, by invitations to the services of the church, or by acts of personal kindness, which, combined with the teachings of the class hour, will express, perhaps as effectively as any other means could, the teacher's genuine and deep desire for the religious welfare of the pupil.

A faith in the Bible as a storehouse and revelation of divine thought, and in truth as an effective agency for the production of character, which will constrain the teacher to make it his first aim in teaching to bring forth clearly the meaning of the Scripture, to make his whole work fundamentally interpretative; a genuine Christian character, and a sincerely religious and prayerful life; a sincere and personal interest in the religious welfare of his pupils; sanctified courage, and good sense in devising ways and means—these are, we believe, the conditions of religiously effective Sunday-school teaching.